

The following letter was written by a Parent:

As a parent of two elementary children, I would like to reassure those readers who do not have children in the system that parents are getting 'reporting' from teachers. In my case, we have had personalized meetings with each teacher and have received a self and teacher evaluation of my son's progress. In fact, the type of 'reporting' that our family has received has been much more informative than the standardized report cards that the Ministry of Education requires. At this point in time, teachers have been exercising their professionalism in deciding how and what are the best ways to report progress, rather than having to force fit a bureaucratic form on top of my children's learning. The report card, principals have been direct to print, will contain only information I already know or can easily find out (ie. attendance at the secondary school level in case of skipping out) via a quick email or phone call to the office.

What the directive from the Ministry really shows is the lack of understanding of the day to day reality in schools. For those readers without children, understand this: The system is underfunded. Parents are raising money for everything from the basics such as library books, classroom supplies, to the essentials of a 21 Century society: a second hand computer lab. Those beautiful playgrounds you see may partially be paid for by small government grants, if the PAC were lucky. The rest of the cost was pizza, cards, chocolates, fun fairs, flowers, sold and sold and sold and sold and sold and sold to US PARENTS by PARENTS for our kids. Yet, the Ministry of Education believes in an alter reality where schools have enough extra paper, printer ink, and TIME, never mind the clerical support, to enact ridiculous measures such as blank report cards.

Whichever bureaucrat came up with this idea needs to get a grip and find out the reality in the schools. I can imagine the meeting: "ha ha ha... we'll really make those teachers look bad... ha ha ha ha...snicker snicker...." I bet the person and committee that approved the directive were smug all night after that one was passed. Frankly: It clearly shows bureaucratic disconnect with both parents and the system.

The negotiated quality education system was stripped almost 10 years ago. In other words, kids and parents all the way to grade 9 have NO idea what is missing. What is it like to have your kid who struggles get psychometric testing quickly instead of waiting 5-6 years or more or pay for it yourself? What is it like to have counselling assistance for a child who is struggling with a family crisis or bullying, and

not have to wait for the 1/4 day the counsellor has at that school, and then get behind the other kids waiting. What is it like to go to a school where there is a librarian there more than 1 day a week? What is it like (as in my kids' case) to go to a school that has less than 50% of the students in portables!! What is it like to be in a split grade class with four, five, six, seven, eight special needs kids and have only teacher and occasional help from an education assistant.

This is the reality in 9555 (according to the the Ministry's website) classrooms around the province. Lets do the math there: 286, 650 students are in classrooms with MORE than three kids with special needs. Shockingly, 3627 classrooms had MORE THAN 30 students. Note that the Ministry does not report how many of the classes over 30 had more than 3 IEPs. And note: They do not report to parents how many classrooms have more than 4, 5, 6,7, 8 IEPs. They do not report how many kids in each class are WAITING for testing so they can have IEPs written.

Invite George to your school if your kids have classes that are exceeding the current legislative maximums, and ASK what it should be like if Christy Clark followed the law that she illegally stripped when she was Minister of Education. The reality is that there isn't even enough funding to follow the current legislation, no wonder they want to keep the focus away from what they have done to the system. We have repeatedly invited the Minister of Education to visit our school and see the conditions first hand: not one has accepted the invitation. The mandate of the Ministry of Education: See no evil. Hear no evil. But let's send out blank report cards... that will show them!!

I call on every parent in the province to send their children's blank report cards to George Abbott. It won't cost you a dime, as mail to the Legislature is free of charge: Parliament Buildings Victoria, BC, V8V 1X4, or fax it to his office 250 387-3200, or email him a scan george.abbott.mla@leg.bc.ca

Take a stand for your kids, your grandkids, other people's kids. Tell them we are DONE. Enough is enough and the stupidity of blank report cards can be a message right back at them. Minister WE ARE DONE!

-Parent